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Just Take a Walk

(based on a talk by Bill Hybels)

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John 17

I think people are tired of being an island, isolated into living separate lives, watching second hand someone else's life on a screen. Would you like to reach across the divide? I want to talk with you about the greatest adventure you could launch yourself on to; the highest calling you could find as a human being...is to begin to just walk

John 17:15 *"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."*

10,000 steps. Roughly that's the distance you travel in a day. It adds up to about 115,000 miles in a lifetime. That's more than 4 times around planet earth. So here's our question today: are you using those steps wisely? Most rooms are about 20'. That's about 10 steps. What if *ten* steps—a thousandth of your daily average, could actually impact eternity? You *could do it*, you know.

Because in today's incredibly isolated world, simply the impact of you going over to someone else, listening to someone else's story, experiencing someone else's world, and caring for them is powerful. "He was interested in me." "She really seems to care about me." People come alive. In today's world, simple kindness and caring are powerful. That in itself is often enough to open a door to a deeper conversation, where you can get to matters of faith and God and his great love for us, which is what we really need.

So this morning I want to say "Just take a walk." Do you know the God of the universe has sought you out? Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to God's mercy, he saved us."* He saved you. He saved me. Listen: God's been pursuing you since the day you were born. You can have that same relationship that I had.

Life's great moments evolve from simple acts of cooperation with God's mysterious promptings; nudges that always lean toward finding what's been lost and freeing what's been enslaved.

There are some things worth walking for: People, for one. People are worth walking for, however you personally get there. Why? Because we worship a God who walks. Jesus Himself walked down from heaven. He left the marvelous fellowship of the Trinity and the worship and adoration of the angels. He wrapped himself in human flesh, and he walked across the cosmos in order to stretch out his hands to people like you and me—many of whom were right in the middle of wrecking their lives. Romans 5:8 summarizes the impact: *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Jesus left the comforts of heaven itself and stepping across time and space, came to rescue us. He said "I came to seek and save lost people." That's it. People were Jesus' one thing. And they still are. Whether they are sick, or lonely, or wandering, or depressed and hopeless. People who have gotten themselves into suffocating habits and destructive relationships. He came for you and me.

Jesus walked to the well, where the woman was who had had 5 husbands. He walked under the sycamore tree, where Zaccheus was, the man who got rich off of cheating other people. He walked up the hill, to the cross, and took the place of death for every human being who puts their faith in Jesus.

And He told stories to show us about walking. In Luke 15 the shepherd walked across a field. He left the flock of 99 to find the one lost sheep. A woman walked around her house, sweeping, to find the one lost coin. And a father walked out to where his prodigal son was returning home.

For you and me it all goes back to a 30' walk. Maybe it's to help pick up cones on your kid's soccer field, to say "Thank you for coaching my son...my daughter." Maybe it's over to your neighbor's when you're both taking the garbage out, or working in your yards. Maybe it's at a cocktail party, or business social function, to someone standing alone. You give them the hand of friendship. And pray for God to be present among you.

In Jesus' last words to his disciples, he is saying "Go. Take a walk." In Acts 1:8, he tells them to go first to their own hometown, then the neighbors, then keep walking, to the ends of the earth. The redemptive advance begins with a step. That was Jesus' mission.

And still today, as you love people, serve people, point people toward faith in Christ, redirect wayward people, restore broken people, and develop people into their best selves as God intended them to be, you reaffirm your understanding of your primary mission in the world.

Why don't we walk? We get comfortable with where we are. And we forget Christ's calling on our lives.

The Holy Spirit living inside you causes you to feel such compassion for someone that you get outside your comfort zone into the zone of the unknown—reaching out to someone else. What usually happens, is you get the "nudge." That's the way God's Holy Spirit often works. You get a nudge to walk over to someone. You get a nudge to listen to their story. You get a nudge to ask a leading spiritual question.

And when you go, you ask God to open a door so you can stop talking about the weather or dogs or the Tigers or the Lions, and talk about the one thing they really need; a relationship with their Creator.

How important a short walk is. So why *don't* we walk? Why don't we stop talking about our diets and our hang ups so that we could share our faith? First, we don't stop talking. Most of us would be amazed by how much more effective we would be in our witnessing if we stopped talking and began to listen.

We think we have to have some official training or program to share our faith, and fear gets the best of us. How many millions of people were never reached because of fear? At this point, I'd like to invite Susan Powers to join me... **SUSAN'S STORY.**

1. Where did the initial thought come from?
2. What emotions were fighting you?
3. How did you experience God, having taken that walk?
4. What would you say to encourage those of us here this morning thinking about taking a walk to someone else?

The truth is, the only sustainable fuel source for getting us to walk, is love. That comes from living with my heart close to God's heart: That love is a fountain that never stops flowing. So—

- We have to fight our comfort zone. Remember Jesus gave it all up for us.
- We have to remember our mission. Jesus came to seek and save the lost.
- We have to fight fear. God will give you something to say.

Jesus himself tells his disciples: Luke 21:14 "*But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.*" Jesus says "Don't worry. I will give you words, when you walk for me."

When you go to share, be filled with love, prompted by the Spirit, and don't worry. And think about the HIGH STAKES. Do you remember before you became a Christ-follower? The time in your life when you would get up in the morning and realize once again you had nobody to share your day with? Or when you would drive to work and be the only one in your car? No words from heaven and nothing supernatural invading your ho-hum world? When you do what you know is wrong and have zero awareness that God has already offered forgiveness for it all? The stakes for that person you go to share with have never been higher. The single greatest gift you can give someone is an introduction to the God who asked his Son to go the unthinkable distance to redeem them. Live as though you actually believe your parent, your coworker, and your neighbor would be better off if they knew my Father: his wisdom, guidance, and forgiveness. Become a walk-across-the-room people who follow my lead! So let's turn up our boldness meters and introduce as many people as possible to the God who is crazy in love with them and wants them to come into his amazing grace!

For the rest of this day...and the rest of our lives, you can decide which way you're going to walk. When you feel the nudge of the Holy Spirit, GO! Quit worrying about how the conversation might go. That fear keeps millions of people from walking. What if... what if... what if you succeed? And you have found a new brother or sister with whom to share the love of God and the greatest adventure there is?

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"